

MR. KIRKHAM'S REPLY TO MR. LANGLEY

Editor, GUIDE:—The privilege extended to us in the department of THE GUIDE known as the "Mail Bag," I prize too much to abuse by sending you any captious reply to Mr. Langley's attack on my letter in your issue of January 26.

The writer much regrets that in dealing with the question of farmers being "non-partisan," that he did not make it clear enough for a man of Mr. Langley's ability to grasp the ideal, "that if we unite our forces we can have our just rights, and if we divide them as in the past we shall fail." We have got to work out our unity as a class to a successful conclusion, in a spirit of all-round co-operation, before we can obtain our just legislative demands.

This idea of brotherhood in politics, like all other eternal principles, cannot be effective without the aid of a party. We can be Liberals or Conservatives without being virulent partisans. Without being machine-men. If we refuse to be machine-voters, then I contend we are true Independents. We become patriots when we refuse to be ruled by machine-bossism, partisan bigotry and prejudice.

There is nothing wrong in a man styling himself a Liberal or a Conservative. The wrong all lies in being an adherent of the clique of bossism, that complicates clouds and corrupts the real issue of all campaigns.

The views of the undersigned are not necessarily those of your readers. They may be, as Mr. Langley says, "wholly wrong." But one thing is sure—they are in no sense what he has construed them to imply, for he is kind enough to say at the beginning of his attack, "He (Mr. Kirkham) does not quite put it that way." I confidently leave the Editor and the numerous readers of THE GUIDE to analyse my letter on "Non-Partisanship," and judge for themselves if Mr. Langley has not absolutely perverted my views, or at least strayed into the pathway of terminological exactitudes. For example, I said, "The great majority of farmers are fairly decent citizens and would not be guilty of taking a bribe, or looking for a political promise of some future lucrative job. They would inwardly despise and vote against the candidate whose agent offered it." Yet Mr. Langley perverts this plainly pronounced sentiment and charges me with saying "They are looking out for jobs." I ask you, sir, and your readers, is this honest educational criticism? Does his letter tend toward unity of a full co-operation of our forces?

We see Mr. Langley, at one time the bold champion of freedom for our class, at one time he is far in the van, at another time we see him (the same man) far in the rear of co-operative principles. What grain growers need is leaders that will take us not only to the verge, but into the heart of the promised land. I blush and turn away from any man who requires us to become partisans of the chequered spectacle of machine-bossism.

The failure of patronism and populism were they neither of them educated the farmers as a class before their leaders entered the arena of a campaign for their legislative demands.

What about the Nationalists and the British Labor party? What about fourteen parties in the German parliament? Are they "needless"?

Whether a farmers' party is "needless" is a debatable question, but that we should be independent as party Liberals and party Conservatives can't truthfully be gainsayed, and I repeat it, whether Mr. Langley thinks it to my shame or my readers deem it to my glory.

The point of controversy between Mr. Langley and those who view the question of unity of votes as I do, is great. If it is great, it must be faced by us; but let all who join in its discussion do so calmly. It is not worth while to engender heat and strife. Let us take care not to say anything that will unman or rend our grand economic organization. Let us try to come to one mind about our political duty as an organization. Our maxim must be substantial uniformity in our legislative demands. Can we obtain this same by the combination of our votes? It is only from ignorance that we differ. Then it is a question of becoming wise through a sound political education, by means of your department, "The Mail Bag."

"O, Unity! Arise!
Thou art all prevailing."

The Grain Growers' political venture is of many colors. Ancient ecclesiastic history tells us Christ's coat had no seam. May we not take this historic emblem of unity as a guide to our political uniformity as a class?

"That when the storm the forest rends,
The robin in the hedge descends
And sober, chirps securely."

FREDERIC KIRKHAM.

Saltcoats, Sask.

A REQUEST FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Editor, GUIDE:—We are very thankful for the GUIDE's article on "Co-Operative Legislation," and our wish is that every bill or any other business of such importance to the farmer coming before either of the parliaments should always be put under a special heading and on the first page of THE GUIDE, so as to attract particular attention.

Enclosed please find a copy of our letter on this subject to W. D. Staples, our M.P. at Ottawa.

Now, Mr. Editor, I had a little chat a few days ago on this particular co-operative question with an old lumber dealer of this vicinity. If I should say we agreed, you wouldn't believe it, and be right in doing so. He tried very hard to impress upon my mind that everywhere where the co-operative system was or had been in force, it was or had been an utter failure and a public calamity (he cited the State of Idaho, doing away with prosperous stores, banks and other business houses and turning nice and flourishing towns into wildernesses and deserts; putting the land around these places far below its value).

Well, Mr. Editor, I am not very intelligent and so utterly failed to see the point, and for cause. Then, I also had a little experience of my own on this question. No Idaho experiences, but in the old country, and let me say I keep deep-rooted in my mind a vivid impression of facts going a long way to prove the exact contrary of this man's assertions. Now, have we not Doctor Grenfell's Co-Operative system in Labrador, and from the glorious accounts of its methods people there seem to be very satisfied with the system.

Now, dear Mr. Editor, couldn't you give us, for more light, your own opinion on this subject? And let us know the opinion of other branches.

Yours sincerely,
GEO. DUSEIGUE.

SPREADING THE TRUTH

Editor, GUIDE:—THE GUIDE is doing excellent pioneer work in educating the farming population. The farmer will never be emancipated from serfdom so long as he remains quiescent. He must raise hand and voice and put forth his utmost energy if he wishes to break asunder the fetters and manacles which bind him fast. But before he will put forth any prodigious energy, he needs must realize that he is dominant, who his masters are and what their plan of action is.

Thanks to THE GUIDE, this information is being disseminated throughout the farmers' homes and already its fruits are seen. May THE GUIDE continue as it has begun, a friend of the farmers, uniting them into a compact body that they, by their united strength, may overthrow the greedy tribe of buccaners who are plundering their homes.

SAM FINLEY.

Glenavon, Sask.

THE FARMERS' DAY

The following quotation is from a statement made by David Horn, Chief Inspector of Grain in Winnipeg and published in George Broomhall's Corn Trade News: "Our farmers are in a state of unrest in regard to grain matters. They have formed associations so that they collectively increase their political pull. By such concerted action they may accomplish what would otherwise be out of the question, and in their demands for changes in inspection, control of elevators and terminals, legislatures and railroads are beginning to sit up and listen. It is the farmers' day, and so long as they are agreed upon what they want, and will hold together, there is no forecasting what they may not accomplish."—Miami Herald.

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* R. H. CARTER.

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